



Restoration brings out building's true colors

The historical society has brought its headquarters back to its original look by fixing the bell tower, replacing damaged boards and windows and repainting.

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BURRILLVILLE -- Students who followed the sound of a ringing bell to class in the Bridgeton School in Pascoag in 1897 saw the same yellow building residents drive by today.

The Burrillville Historical and Preservation Society, which is now housed there, has finished the exterior restoration of the building on Laurel Hill Avenue.

The historical society brought the formerly cream-colored building with dark-brown trim -- the color preservationists previously thought was the school's first -- to a lemon yellow "spring dust" with forest-green trim.

Last summer, society members began with the bell tower. Preservation experts dug deep into the layers of various colors of paint under the eaves to find the original color. In February, they began fixing and replacing damaged clapboards piecemeal, said society President Betty Mencucci.

"It was more time consuming, but we try to retain as much of the original wood as we can," she said.

In some places, the paint was peeling off part of the building in big chunks, because the insulation was trapping moisture against the wall. So they used a vacuum to suck out the insulation.

They also repaired windows that had been painted over, and not opened in years, Mencucci said. The last piece of the project will be to restore the doors.

The \$113,000 project was financed by \$40,000 from a state preservation grant, \$40,000 from the Champlin Foundation, and \$25,000 from the Levy Foundation. The remaining cost was funded from the \$30,000 bell-tower project.

The Bridgeton School originally housed grades one and two in one room, and three and four in another until 1966. The society bought the building from the town for \$1 in 1996.

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